to Africa', which appeared in 'The Time of India'. While the Confederation of Indian Industry, New Delhi have invited a business delegation from Uganda, no specific complaint from Ugandan importers against Indian exporters for export of sub-standard quality goods has come to the notice.

However, the following steps have been initiated to ensure export of quality goods by Indian exporters to overseas countries:—

— prescription of quality standards for commodities notified under The Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963;

— recognition of certain private inspection agencies to suppliment the work of quality certification;

— organisation of seminars and workshops to educate the manufacturers and exporters on the methods of maintaining quality including packaging;

— organisation of exhibitions abroad to show quality goods from the Indian industry;

— provision of assistance by Total Quality Management Division already set up in CII to its members on establishing quality related system in the manufacturing process registered under ISO 9000 series.

Measures to reduce Paper Work for Exporters

2428. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the news-item appeared in "The Hindustan Times" of 27th November, 1996 captioned "Exporter has still to fill in 40 document" and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no steps have been taken in the last five months to reduce such paperwork for exporters;

(b) the reasons for ignoring the demands from exporters for less paper work; and

(c) the steps proposed to reduce such needless documentation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Simplification and reduction of documentation being a continuous exercise, it undertakes from time to time keeping in view the changing needs consistent with policy liberalisation and modern information technology.

However, export related documentation is crucial to trade operation for both Government and Trade to monitor and control the movement of goods and to safeguard every party's legitimate interests.

(c) Some of the significant steps taken to reduce documentation include standardising documents to computer acceptable formats, increasing computer based operations in the working of various agencies connected with trade so as to facilitate Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and progessive reduction in licensing and other discretionery controls which will also substantially reduce the need for documentation.

Bilateral Trade between India and Russia

2429. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: DR. RANBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of steps are being taken to augment the bilateral trade between India and Russia;

(b) if so, the details thereof with background;

(c) whether these measures will bridge the information gap between the two countries;

(d) whether Government propose to take similar steps to augment the bileteral trade between India and other countries;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A number of steps for promoting bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Russian Federation have been taken by the Government which include:—

— promotion of dialogue with the Russian side including discussions at the highest level;

— constant review of bilateral trade through the Joint Commission mechanism with its Working Groups on Trade and Economic Cooperation and on Pharmaceuticals and Sub-group on Transport which meet separately at regular intervals;

facilitating through bilateral consultations, the rapid utilisation of debt owed to Russia in the form of export of goods;

— promotion of direct business contact through exchange of delegations, Joint Business Councils, holding of exhibition, participation in fairs, buyer seller meets, etc.

— promotion of consignment exports and ensuring greater presence of Indian banks.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Government has also been making concerted efforts for agumenting bilateral trade between India and countries other than Russia. The important measures being taken in this regard include the following:—

— extension of mutual Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment;

— signing of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement;

— signing of bilateral Investment Promotion Agreement;

— regular meeting of Inter-Governmental Commissions (IGC); and

— active and regular interaction between the members of trade and industry at the level of Joint Business Council (JBC).

(f) Does not arise.

Reservation of Posts for the Disabled

2430. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister affirmed the Government's commitment on reservation of posts for the disabled in his Independence Day speech on August 15, 1996;

(b) if so, how far the scheme has already been implemented indicating the percentage of posts already filled by disabled personnel in Central Government services and public sector undertakings;

(c) whether the scheme includes filling of such posts by persons suffering from maladies related with weakness of mind, but who, according the specialist doctors attending on them, can be helped to lead a life with dignity, by offering them suitable assignments; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (d) The Prime Minister in his Independence Day address inter-alia reaffirmed the Government's commitment to take steps to ensure that reservations in employment for disabled persons are uniformly implemented. Since the persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995 which provides for statutory reservation of not less than 3% of jobs for disabled persons against identified posts has been enforced only w.e.f. 7th Feb. 1996, it is too early to assess the impact of reservation policy for the handicapped. Although there is